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C1248 - The Two Listening-In Students



Chapter 1248: The Two Listening-In Students

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Led by a master teacher, Zhang Xuan soon arrived at a majestic hall.

Within the hall were Wu shi, Yao shi, and the others. On the guest seat was a silk-robed middle-aged man, and two young men stood behind him.

Taking a quick peek over, Zhang Xuan found that the aura of the middle-aged man was deeply concealed within his body, like lightning shrouded by ominous storm clouds, rendering him incapable of gauging the latter's strength.

On the other hand, the young men had powerful Primordial Spirits lying dormant within their bodies, ready to bring forth devastating damage at any moment—Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage cultivators.

Judging from their physiques, Zhang Xuan gauged them to be beneath thirty this year. To wield such strength at their young age, they were indeed nothing short of the word ‘frightening’. They would not pale even in comparison to the highly-talented Zhang Jiuxiao.

“Zhang shi!” Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, Wu shi immediately stood up and introduced with a smile, “Seated over here is the guide to the Sanctum of Sages, Zhao Xingmo! Zhao shi, this is Zhang Xuan, whom I spoke much about earlier. He possesses unparalleled talent not only in our Qingyuan Empire but possibly across all eight Conferred Empires!”

“Un.” Zhao Xingmo took a look at Zhang Xuan before giving a slight nonchalant nod.

It was as if he had heard so many of such introductions that they could not faze him anymore.

On the other hand, Zhang Xuan began swiftly scanning the room.

Other than the few of them, Zhang Jiuxiao and ten or so of the more outstanding young geniuses from the Qingyuan Empire Master Teacher Pavilion were also in the room.

A moment later, when two more men finally arrived, Zhao Xingmo said with an impatient frown, “Since everyone is already gathered here, let’s begin!”

Nodding, Pavilion Master Wu took a sweeping gaze at the surroundings before announcing, “Master teachers, I believe that all of you should know of Zhao shi, so I won’t waste your time introducing him to you once more. For the Selection of Sages this time around, the guide shall be conducting the test himself. Without further ado, let us invite him to announce the rules for the test, as well as what you will have to prepare.”

The crowd quickly turned their gazes over to Zhao Xingmo.

“There’s no need for any preparation. First and foremost, I shall announce the requirements for the selection. Those who fail to meet the requirement need not waste

any more of their time here,” Zhao Xingmo announced impassively.

“I’ll assume those who are gathered here should have some understanding of the Sanctum of Sages. There are several strict requirements for one to enroll into the Sanctum of Sages—one must become a 7-star master teacher and achieve a cultivation of Saint 3-dan Embryonic Soul realm before thirty. I can see that most of you here have already met the requirements, but... in my view, it would be best for one to have as high a cultivation as possible. So far, only two of you have reached Saint 4-dan. Therefore, other than those two, the rest of you can leave right now.”

“This...”

“That’s all to the selection?”

“Isn’t this taking the Selection of Sages a little too lightly?”

Not expecting Zhao Xingmo to reduce the number of candidates to two just on the basis of their cultivation, everyone could not help but look at one another in astonishment.

"The Sanctum of Sages isn't like the Master Teacher Academies that you know of. It won't accept any master teacher just because they have met the prerequisites. You all should know that it's the highest academy in the Master Teacher Continent, and it's a place to nurture future Sages. Those whose strength pales in comparison to their peers really shouldn't be wasting their time," Zhao Xingmo uttered coldly.

"I don't have that much time to waste with the rest of you!"

"Ah..."

Pavilion Master Wu did not think that Zhao Xingmo would actually be so direct. However, considering that the futures of a dozen young, talented master teachers of his Qingyuan Empire Master Teacher Pavilion were at stake, he interjected. "Zhao shi, isn't it a little too reckless to choose the candidates solely on the grounds of their cultivation? Why don't you take another look at them? Even if their cultivation is lacking, they might be able to make up for it through other aspects."

"There's no need for that. To be honest with you, I am only in charge of the preliminary selections. There will be another round of selections when we arrive at the Qianchong Empire and a final examination when we enter the City of Sages. Those whose cultivation has yet to reach Primordial Spirit realm won't even be able to clear the selections at Qianchong Empire, so it would only be a waste of time to bring them along!" Zhao Xingmo waved his hands casually.

"I see..." Since Zhao Xingmo had already said such words, there was nothing else Pavilion Master Wu could do. Shaking his head helplessly, he turned to the dozen or so eliminated master teachers and said, "There's no need to be too disheartened by this setback. As long as you set your mind to it, you will be able to advance to great heights no matter where you are. The Sanctum of Sages isn't the only place for you to spread your wings and soar."

"Alright then..." Knowing that there was nothing they could do about the situation either, the dozen young geniuses could only shake their heads and leave.

In truth, they also knew that it was unlikely that they would have been chosen. Their cultivation and talent weren't too weak either, but compared to Zhang Xuan and Zhang Jiuxiao, they knew that they were still sorely lacking.

With those two competing for the slot in the Qingyuan Empire as well, there was no way that they would be picked.

Soon, Zhang Xuan and Zhang Jiuxiao were the only candidates left in the room. Zhao Xingmo turned his gaze over and said, "Only the elites of mankind are allowed into the Sanctum of Sages, and these are the people who will eventually lead mankind to greater heights. But in order to have others submit to you, the most important thing one must possess is strength. As such, for this preliminary selection, I shall be taking strength to be the main assessment criterion."

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan nodded.

He could relate deeply to that sentiment. Schemes and disguises could bring others over to one's side in the short-term, but what would compel others submit to one was overwhelming strength.

Take the current Zhang Xuan for example. Possessing unsurpassed might in the Qingyuan Empire, he no longer had to fear anyone or anything there. If he wished to, he would be able to exert his dominance over the populace, and no one would be able to oppose him.

As for disguises, they would ultimately be exposed in a matter of time, so they were not a reliable measure.

It was for this reason that most powerhouses relied not on schemes but the might of their fists to establish their dominance.

Unwilling to submit? He would just have to crush the dissenters until they finally gave in!

The same went for the Master Teacher Pavilion as well. Of course, its values and impartiality did allow it to win the heart of the others, but without sufficient strength at its foundation, it would only have been a matter of time before their leadership was questioned and overthrown.

There were two occupations in history who had challenged the Master Teacher Pavilion's leadership—the soul oracles and the poison masters.

The soul oracles had been completely eradicated, such that their heritage had been completely terminated, and there was barely any trace of them to be found in the current times. As for the poison masters, they had been exiled to the darkest corners of the world, not daring to show their faces in public.

Unquestionably, strength played a crucial role in building one's authority.

Similarly, the reason Sage Clans were so widely feared by others was not because of their ties to disciples of Kong shi but because they had a strong foundation and overwhelming might that left others with no choice but to take them seriously.

Only the strong were qualified to show compassion to others. Without sufficient strength, all words spoken were nothing but empty.

Zhang Jiuxiao also nodded in agreement.

Even though he was only from the side family, if his cultivation had already reached Saint 6-dan or Saint 7-dan, he would have been highly regarded by his clan. He would not have fallen into this position, where he needed to go through so much trouble to vie for a slot to the Sanctum of Sages in a mere Conferred Empire.

Seeing that the duo understood his intention, Zhao Xingmo gestured to the two young men behind him and said, "These two are listening-in students ¹ of the Sanctum of Sages. Even though they are not outstanding cultivators, their individual strength is still not too bad. On top of that, they are also able to complement one another through a collaborative formation. If one of you is able to withstand three moves against their collaboration, I'll take it as a pass!"

Huala!

As Zhao Xingmo said those words, the two young men stepped forward and exerted their auras. In an instant, the entire hall suddenly seemed to have turned freezing cold, leaving those present feeling deeply pressured.

"They aren't too bad..."

Just from their disposition alone, Zhang Xuan could tell that even though those two only possessed a cultivation of Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage, they wielded fighting prowess that could match any ordinary Primordial Spirit realm pinnacle expert. If the two of them were to collaborate perfectly with one another, it was likely that they would be able to match even a Leaving Aperture realm primary stage expert!

In other words, even Pavilion Master Wu could be placed in a dangerous position when faced against them!

And yet... they were only listening-in students of the Sanctum of Sages?

If that was the case, just how powerful were the real students of the Sanctum of Sages?

After making introductions, Zhao Xingmo looked at the two examinees and asked, "Who wants to go first?"

Zhang Jiuxiao took a look at the duo before him, and after evaluating them, he shook his head with a bitter smile and sent a telepathic message to Zhang Xuan. "Zhang shi, I didn't know that you were intending to head to the Sanctum of Sages as well. Since that's the case, I think I'll just forfeit here."

"Forfeit?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He did not expect a person as proud as Zhang Jiuxiao to admit defeat so easily.

"Indeed. Rather than embarrass myself, I think it would be better if I just forfeit right here," Zhang Jiuxiao said helplessly.

Since he had traveled down to Qingyuan City from his home to vie for the only slot here, there was no doubt that he harbored great hopes for the Sanctum of Sages. He had thought that he would be able to succeed this time around, but who knew that Zhang Xuan would suddenly appear at this moment? Regardless from which aspect he was looking at, he had no confidence that he would be able to match Zhang shi.

Previously, he had thought that given his talent, he might still be able to put up a fight. However, after finding out that Zhang Xuan was a Celestial Master Teacher, he dared not harbor such thoughts anymore.

Figures like Zhang Xuan were destined to make their mark in history. There was no way someone like him could possibly stand against Zhang Xuan.

Furthermore, he had just made a swift calculation, and he realized that with his current strength, it was very unlikely that he would be able to survive three moves against the duo.

"This..." Seeing through Zhang Jiuxiao's thoughts, Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before turning to Zhao Xingmo. "Zhao shi, you said earlier that anyone who is able to survive three moves against their collaboration will clear the test, correct?"

"That's right," Zhao Xingmo replied affirmatively.

"Then, if both of us withstand three moves, would this mean that we will both be receive the slots for the Sanctum of Sages?"

"Both of you?" Zhao Xingmo shot a glance at Zhang Xuan before replying nonchalantly, "From the looks of it, it seems more likely that both of you will fail the test."

"That's not necessarily so," Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

He had harbored some prejudice toward the Zhang Clan due to the issue between Luo Ruoxin and that young prodigy of the Zhang Clan, but after spending some time with Zhang Jiuxiao, he realized that the latter was just a little too proud. Other than that, Zhang Jiuxiao was not as bad as he had initially thought.

Zhang Jiuxiao had left his home to reside in Qingyuan City for several years, all in the hope of attaining the Qingyuan Empire's slot to the Sanctum of Sages. If Zhang Xuan had not cut in abruptly, it was likely that he would have been the one to have obtained the slot. If the two of them could head to the Sanctum of Sages together, that would really be for the best!

"If both of you can survive three moves from those two, I'll consider the matter. However, just a word of advice—don't overestimate yourself." Seeing the confident smile on Zhang Xuan's face, Zhao Xingmo warned, "Since I set the test in such a manner, you should also know that it won't be easy to survive three moves from those two!"

He earnestly did not believe that the master teachers from a humble Conferred Empire would be able to survive three moves from these two listening-in students from the Sanctum of Sages.

"It'll suffice as long as you are willing to consider the matter. Alright then, I guess we will have to try our best to survive those three moves," Zhang Xuan replied.

"It's good to see that you are confident. Let's hope that it isn't arrogance," Zhao Xingmo replied with a frown. "Alright, who is going first?"

"Allow me!" Zhang Xuan stepped forward.

He released his aura as well—Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage. In contrast to the two young men before him, the might that he released seemed insignificant.

"Those are big words. Let's see what kind of strength you possess!"

The young men sneered coldly as they flitted forward, flanking Zhang Xuan on both sides.

They had positioned themselves perfectly to seal all plausible escape routes that anyone trapped in between them could possibly take, leaving him feeling as if he was locked within a cage.

"To exert psychological pressure ahead of the battle to make their opponent panic, not bad..." Zhang Xuan nodded in approval.

As expected of experts from the Sanctum of Sages, they really paid careful attention to every single aspect of battle in order to ascertain their victory. Through their psychological pressure, those who possessed a weaker state of mind would be more prone to falling into a state of panic, especially if they found themselves cornered in the midst of the battle.

Once a seed of doubt was planted in their minds, it could possibly change the tides of the battle entirely.

“Your battle plan isn’t too bad, but to compete with me in a battle of wills, the both of you are still lacking.”

Raising his chin, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and stepped forward.

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